



## UNAC Connection - August 2022



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## AY23 Appointment Letters: Sign Them

United Academics bargaining unit members should have received appointment letters for the upcoming academic year; if you haven't received yours yet, contact your supervisor's office and notify your UNAC Org VP. Unfortunately, the new appointment letters will show the same salary you received last academic year, or a full-time-equivalent for faculty who are working less than full time.

Faculty have inquired with us whether they should or should not sign their appointment letters. We appreciated the inquiries and have debated the pros and cons of signing versus not signing. The UNAC Executive Board concluded that, *YES, faculty should sign the appointment letters currently being issued by UA administrators.*

When a new CBA is eventually ratified, faculty should expect new appointment letters to be issued with updated salaries, and faculty should expect to receive back-pay for fall pay periods issued without salary increases. This is, of course, assuming that we are able to come to a tentative agreement with UA management before January 2023, when the Alaska legislature reconvenes, allowing UA management to request a supplemental budget to fund faculty raises.

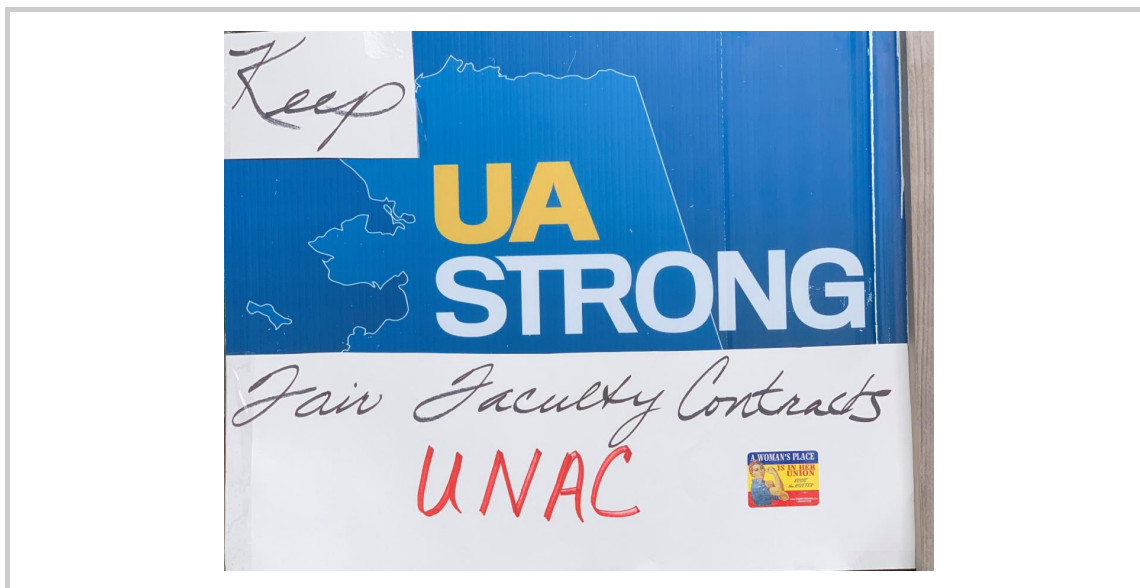
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# Mediation Continues

We had hoped to start this academic year with a contract ratification vote on a new Collective Bargaining Agreement. However, we have not yet reached a tentative agreement with the administration's bargaining team. Both teams continue to participate in mediation, with our next session scheduled for August 22, where we hope for a positive response to our [latest proposal](#).

Unlike bargaining over the last academic year, no audiences are allowed at mediation sessions, and what happens during the sessions is confidential. We will keep membership updated to the maximum extent possible when we have news to share.

On a related note, NEA-Alaska sent a [letter to President Pitney](#) on August 8, urging her and the Board of Regents to settle a fair, negotiated contract with United Academics. We very much appreciate this show of support from Alaska's largest k-12 teacher's union. We look forward to reciprocating the support when asked. Solidarity!



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## Have YOU Signed Our Summer Petition?

In mid-July, we started circulating [this petition calling for a fair, negotiated contract](#) If you haven't signed it yet, now is the time! We want all bargaining unit members to encourage friends and family members to sign.

This isn't limited to UA faculty--students and community members are encouraged to sign too! Please share this petition widely. We'll deliver it to President Pitney in the near future!

If each of our active members gets 5-10 signatures, we can reach 1000 quickly.

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## When to Seek Union Help

The short answer is this: if a member ever has the thought, "I wonder if this is a union issue," or "I wonder if the union can answer my question/help with my issue," a

call or email to union staff or leadership is the right thing to do. UNAC's officers and staff are always happy to talk with bargaining unit members and will do everything possible to help answer questions and resolve issues.

**Members should definitely contact United Academics if:**

- You don't receive your paychecks on time
- You feel pressured to do additional work not listed on your workload
- You need to take FML and don't know how to proceed
- You need or want to take a leave of absence
- You need to extend your promotion/tenure timeline or need an exception to standard processes
- Your supervisor calls you to a meeting and won't provide an agenda or clear reason for the meeting
- Your supervisor calls you to a disciplinary meeting, or a meeting you feel might turn disciplinary
  - In this case, you are [legally entitled to union representation](#) upon request. Simply tell your supervisor to schedule the meeting when union representation can join
- You are having trouble with a co-worker that your supervisor fails to address
- You are offered additional compensation (e.g. special contract for course preparation, research, or creative activities) and are concerned about your intellectual property rights
- You are not offered compensation for additional work (eg course preparation, additional research, creative activity, or service) and are concerned that you should be paid for your additional work

*Contact information is listed at the bottom of this newsletter.*

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## **Member Dispatch: From the Trenches**

### **My Last Best Offer: Work-to-Rule**

*By Dorn Van Dommelen (UAA)*

University faculty members are generally engaged in a labor of love. Our jobs are more than paychecks. We love our disciplines, we're passionate about teaching, and we stay engaged in scholarship and research even when tenured. We believe in our work. So, it is no surprise that as the universities of Alaska have faced terrible cuts we have been very willing to pitch in.

Deans ask us to increase enrollment, we call students to encourage them to register, we serve more roles than we used to due to faculty attrition. At least in my building, we are now even fixing photocopiers, sorting mail, and answering student directional questions since we have been without an administrative assistant for years now.

But I think the university administration has made it abundantly clear that we should curtail the work that we do to what we were trained and hired to do. In fact, President Pitney clearly stated in a recent missive to us that "UA's faculty members are focused on the success of their students, programs, and research". I propose that we put that focus into practice. Let's commit ourselves to "students, programs, and research," and the work that is required of us by our contract and annual workloads, and leave the rest to the university's administrators.

If it's not in our workload or contract, it should be done by someone else. We need to do our jobs well, but only our jobs. The university administration can pick up the

slack and change the ink in the printer.

*\*Any member wishing to contribute content to our newsletter is welcome to do so!  
Please contact an officer in UNAC leadership and/or UNAC staff for guidance.*



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## Announcement: Secretary Replacement

The Executive Board is pleased to formally announce that Dr. Debasmita Misra (UAF) was nominated in July by multiple faculty members in the system and was appointed by the Executive Board to complete the remaining term as statewide secretary. Dr. Charla Brown (UAS) stepped down to avoid a new conflict of interest with recent pursuits. Thanks to Dr. Brown for her dedicated years of service in UNAC leadership, and thank you to Dr. Misra for agreeing to serve in this important role.



## Spring 2023 Statewide Officer Elections

In spring semester, 2023, [members in good standing](#) (dues payers for 3 months or more) will elect UNAC's next statewide president, secretary, and treasurer. These roles are outlined in [our by-laws](#).

This election seems like a long way off now, but it's time to start thinking about whether YOU should be one of UNAC's future statewide officers. To ensure your eligibility to run for office and vote in officer elections, you must remain or become a dues-paying member for three months prior to the election.

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## Union Telephone Number Update

Due to office staff working partially at home and the possibility of messages left on the office phone not being heard for several days, United Academics made the decision to disconnect our land line. Staff and officer cell phones and email addresses are available on our website's ['contact us' page](#). Don't hesitate to call our officers', Contract Manager's, Organizing Manager's cell phones if you have a time-sensitive concern.

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## **Upcoming Action Opportunities**

### **Write Letters to the Editor or Commentary Pieces**

- Send it to your local newspaper (and send us a link or copy when it's published!)
- Consider focusing on one or more of the following:
  - Why you took your job and what you love about it
  - How the loss in spending power has affected you (consider mentioning your approximate salary to dispel the myth that all faculty earn high salaries)
  - How your working conditions have changed since you took your job, and how the changes affect your students and your work
  - How the past year of negotiations has affected you personally and/or professionally

### **Stage a Solidarity Photo at Your Location**

- Take a solo selfie or gather colleagues, friends, and/or family members
- Make homemade signs or contact UNAC staff for images to print locally (optional)
- Wear red shirts or UNAC shirts (optional)
  - We can mail them to you! Contact staff for help getting shirts
  - emails are at the bottom of this newsletter
- Take a photo and share it to our social media pages and with UNAC

**Follow us on social media, share/retweet, post new content, and tag us:**

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)

**Your participation in these actions matters!  
Do whatever you can do to help your bargaining  
team reach a fair and competitive contract!**

**RECAP:  
Summer 2022 Faculty Actions for  
a Fair, Negotiated Contract**



*UAA faculty rallied during the June 2022 BOR meeting*



*UAF faculty rallied outside (and then inside) President Pitney's office in late May 2022*



*UAS faculty rallied outside the state capitol in late June 2022*



## **Reminders**

# **Student Loan Forgiveness**

If you have student loan debt, have made regular payments, and have worked full-time for ten years anywhere in the University of Alaska system or at other public institutions, you should qualify for loan forgiveness under the newly revamped Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.

Our national affiliate, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has partnered with a non-profit organization, [Summer](#), to help members apply for and receive PSLF. Go to [this website](#) for more information.

## Weingarten Rights

If you find yourself called into a meeting with your direct supervisor that you believe could result in discipline, you have the right to request union representation at that meeting. Contact your Organizational Vice President for guidance. From the [National Labor Relations Board](#) website:

Any meeting may be an “investigatory interview” provided that the following occur:

- A manager, representative of management, or supervisor is seeking to question an employee.
- The questioning is part of an investigation into the employee’s performance or work conduct. During an investigatory interview, a representative of management may require an employee to defend, explain, or admit misconduct or work performance issues that may form the basis for discipline or discharge.
- The employee reasonably believes that the investigation may result in discharge, discipline, demotion, or other adverse consequence to their job status or working conditions.
- The employee requests a union representative. Employers are not required to advise employees of their right to representation and third parties (including union representatives) may not make the request on behalf of the employee.

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## MEETING NOTICES

### UNAC General Membership Meetings

NEXT MEETING:

- Tuesday, September 12, 2022, from 5:30-7:00 p.m.
- Regularly scheduled meetings: every second Tuesday from 5:30-7:00 p.m.
- Additional meetings scheduled as needed

Separate emails with meeting information, including the Zoom link, will be sent to all bargaining unit members before each meeting.

### Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting

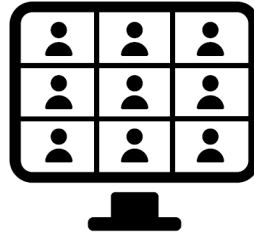
August 20, 2022 (Sat) 10:00am 2:00pm AKT via Zoom.

### UNAC Executive Board Meetings

Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

(scheduling conflicts will require this to change after classes resume--new time TBD)

Dues paying members are welcome to observe the RA and Executive Board meetings. Contact your Org VP and/or office staff for the Zoom link.



## Executive Board and Staff Contact

**President - Abel Bult-ito, Ph.D.**  
abel.bult.ito@unac4996ak.com

**Treasurer - Nelta Edwards, Ph.D.**  
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**Secretary - Debasmita Misra, Ph.D.**  
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**UAA Organizational VP - Tara Palmer**  
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**UAS Organizational VP - Jill Dumesnil, Ph.D.**  
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**UAF Organizational VP - Mara Bacsujlaky**  
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**Extended Sites Organizational VP - Rick McDonald**  
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**Contract Manager - Melanie Arthur, Ph.D.**  
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**Organizing Manager - Kate Quick**  
kate.quick@unac4996ak.com

**United Academics Local #4996** (UNAC) is the bargaining unit that represents all non-tenure track (term), tenure track, and tenured faculty at the University of Alaska. UNAC is an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

[www.unitedacademics.net](http://www.unitedacademics.net)



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